
Ethnography of an Alternative College Library

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AND FRANK C. MOTLEY

ABSTRACT

A FICTIONALIZED PERUSAL of documents that an acting dean—let us call her Merriam Meade, anthropologist and member of the faculty—finds on the desk of her predecessor at the college library. This “ethnography” describes multimedia and interdisciplinary research services and programs offered at The Evergreen State College. Among the innovations for integrating library and classroom research instruction which have evolved in the college library’s fifteen year history are job exchanges between faculty librarians and teaching faculty, staff taught courses and workshops, and a student centered philosophy of service. Although the memoranda are often real ones from everyday work, names are only occasionally those of the actual persons in current positions at Evergreen.

THE SITUATION AND SETTING

In Spring 1989, I participated in a one-quarter job rotation at The Evergreen State College Library. The faculty librarians here regularly rotate into full-time teaching responsibilities; during this particular quarter, the library dean was scheduled to teach at a branch campus in an academic program called “Health and Human Services.”

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I have taught anthropology at The Evergreen State College for five years and ten years prior to that had been an academic administrator at another institution. When asked to assume the library deanship for three months, I looked forward to the chance to sharpen problem-solving and management skills in a new setting. I also wanted an opportunity to see the library from the inside, to observe its operations as well as its collection, and I welcomed the chance to flee the field of anthropology for a short time. Nonetheless, it became impossible to escape applying research techniques to this new cultural setting. Settling into the new job, I remained the participant observer I had been in other research environments.

BACKGROUND

First, I found myself slipping into the ethnographer's role as I interviewed Dean Susan Perry before she vacated her desk. She reiterated some basic premises about the library: that unlike some of its counterparts on other campuses, it takes the lead within the college in integrating information sciences and communication arts into the interdisciplinary curriculum; that its staff is committed to teaching students to access, evaluate, interpret, and create information in all media; and that library personnel includes teachers with a variety of disciplinary specialties and degrees.

Such facts at first suggested normality to me. Didn't they describe any college library as it should be? Then I reflected on differences observed among other educational "cultures" and The Evergreen State College. The academic focus of the college is on what has been called "student-centered education"—education which centers on the needs of the student rather than on those of the instructor. In the attempt to practice student-centered education, Evergreen generally avoids departmentalization, tenure systems, lecture courses, and even the reserve book room. A written evaluation system replaces the more traditional grading system. Evergreen experiments with ways to empower students to find, analyze, and interpret information independently. Evergreen is also committed to providing the highest quality education to a wide and diverse group of students. The institution considers the progress each individual makes while in college to be of greater importance than how high his or her SAT entrance scores might be.

Having reminded myself how different the college was from its academic counterparts, I investigated how the library might be affected by the difference. The most intriguing aspect of the library is the teaching, which is a direct or indirect function of an unusually high percentage of the staff members who successfully apply the tenets

of Evergreen teaching philosophy in their instruction. My playful research question became, then, how are instructional activities made manifest in this library, and what cultural premises do they presume?

FIELD WORK

I asked Dean Perry to allow me to practice some selective observation. She left a number of previously written documents and memoranda about the library's teaching function on her desk. The following pages reveal the materials found there a week later when I began my rotation into the Deanship.

The first documents were on the faculty rotation process—i.e., the faculty membership obligations of some librarians and an evaluation of work by one librarian when she taught in an academic program in the health field:



The Evergreen State College

FACULTY MEMBERSHIP AT THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE LIBRARY

Frank Motley and Mary Huston

ABSTRACT
PAPER PRESENTED AT THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE
AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES CONFERENCE
1981

Librarians at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, participate in the educational process of the institution through a unique model of faculty membership. Evergreen faculty librarians rotate into the teaching faculty for at least one quarter every three years to teach fulltime. Reciprocally, teaching faculty members rotate into the library to do collection development and reference work. Participation in weekly book seminars is another responsibility of faculty librarians. In teaching and in book seminars with faculty colleagues, librarians have an opportunity for in-depth engagement with information. This greater faculty contact with librarians has furthered understanding of the importance of integrating information issues into coursework. Similarly, librarians have become increasingly aware, through active participation, of the educational process at Evergreen and remain current in subject areas; the result has been expanded potential to

develop library programs appropriate to academic needs. Simultaneously, students studying with faculty librarians have developed a new perspective on librarians' (and the library's) role in the educational process.



The Evergreen State College

April 25, 1989

COLLEGIAL EVALUATION OF MARY HUSTON

Willie Parson, Member of the Faculty

Let me begin by saying that I have enjoyed our time teaching together in Human Health and Behavior and continue to enjoy our association since your departure from the program. From the outset, you have brought a deep sense of commitment to your work in the program. Students have been quite perceptive of your genuine excitement by, and interest in, the ideas and substance of the program. Thus, they have responded to you by demanding more of themselves than perhaps might have been the case had you not been there. I saw a number of students really come into their own as a consequence of your efforts to encourage and inspire them to reach new levels of achievement.

I believe you did a wonderful job of designing, implementing, and conducting the research and critical reasoning workshops. Your work in this capacity has resulted in our having a program more or less full of students who really know how to conduct research, how to articulate a thesis, and how to develop critical and cogent arguments in support of their theses. Certainly not everyone does each of these things equally well, but everyone has developed the foundations for doing research and argumentation at a level befitting an advanced student in the social sciences.

I have valued your participation in our faculty seminars. I think you bring a clear perspective into our discussions that is informed by your concern for people, your interest in substantive ideas, and your continual development of new knowledge. You are constantly on the lookout for new and exciting ideas and this manifests itself in our seminars through the questions you raise and the stimulating insights you offer. This has had significant impact on me. For example, I have taken an active interest in the sociology of knowledge and in the matter of writing (and rewriting) of history all because of ideas you have brought into seminars. I look forward to our association in the future.

Best,

Willie

A taxonomy of different teaching situations for the library staff began to emerge. I had learned from other informants that in addition to teaching outside the library, faculty librarians and staff from the library teach internships, individual contracts (or independent study), and about six formal, credit-generating courses in research and media within the library, all of them designed to supplement the more standard academic work. The various modes of instruction were outlined in a letter, which was followed by an example of a student's evaluation of a librarian's teaching.



The Evergreen State College

August 16, 1988

Ms. Celia Black
1001 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Black:

Enclosed is the survey data you requested for your doctoral study of library instruction. In your cover letter, you encourage respondents to elaborate on their answers. I would like to do so, since my answer may be misleading without further explanation. You may be surprised to read that the library staff at Evergreen generated approximately 2,002 academic credits in the past year. We generate credits in two principle ways: by sponsoring individual contracts and by teaching credit-generating courses. Individual contracts are a form of instruction at Evergreen which allows advanced students to design their own courses of study and to work largely independently with weekly meetings with their faculty sponsor. A partial list of the individual contracts we sponsored in the past year will demonstrate the wide range of expertise of our staff.

<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>CONTRACT TITLE</u>	<u>CREDITS</u>	<u>QUARTER</u>
Randal Barbara, Photographer II	Images of Nicaraguan Culture: A Photographic Documentary	16	W
Marge Brown, Media Supervisor	Advanced Film Animation	4	W
Sarah Pedersen, Cataloging Librarian	A Bibliography of Cross- Cultural Child Development	8	S

Lucy Enriquez, Documents Specialist	Pacific Northwest Chicano Cultural Expressions	8	F
Bob Haft, Slide Curator	Study and Recording of Otter Behavior through Underwater Photography	16	F
Mary Huston, Reference Librarian	Idea Tactics for Inter- disciplinary On-Line Searching	12	W
Peter Randlette, Electronic Media Producer	Experimentations in Electronic Music Production	16	W
Ernestine Kimbro, Reference Librarian	Paradigms for Science	16	W
Susan Perry, Library Dean	Explorations of Social Psychology through Women's Literature	8	S
Char Davies, Head of Elec- tronic Media	Advanced Video: Psychology and Production of Commercials	4	F

To give you a better idea of the nature of contract work, I have included excerpts from Mary Huston's evaluation of one student's contract work during spring quarter 1982.

The genesis of Karen Kamera-Gose's work this quarter was her recognition that "the multitude of descriptors and databases that can be used in interdisciplinary searching demand powers of conceptualization and synthesis beyond the requirements of a single discipline search." Although computer-based literature searching has existed for two decades, the first article on interdisciplinary searching did not appear in the professional literature until 1978, and no empirical studies on the process have been done to date. Karen's project, therefore, is a pioneer effort...her assistance model for searches is designed to facilitate interdisciplinary search queries...it enhances our multidisciplinary thinking abilities, and reminds us to use those facets of the searching software that lend themselves to interdisciplinary searching. Dr. Mignon, professor at the University of Washington, described her findings as "a dynamic, sequential theoretical model." A paper summarizing her work-to-date has been accepted for presentation at the National Online Meeting in March 1982, New York City. Entitled "A Facilitation Model of Idea Tactics for Interdisciplinary Searches," the paper draws from cognitive psychology in suggesting models for interdisciplinary database searching.

The quality of her ideas leaves no doubt of her capability for significant original work. Among the intellectual abilities that I observed in her work this quarter were the capabilities for analysis, abstraction, and synthesis, and written and oral communication. These strengths were evidenced in her facility

for synthesizing disparate ideas from multiple fields and applying them to yet another field. She cogently articulated her interim hypotheses in weekly discussions and, in her final manuscript, brilliantly reviewed the theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings of her research.

Through independent learning contracts, we generated 374 academic credits in the past year. In addition, we regularly teach more traditional group courses. "Media for the Uninitiated" is offered three quarters a year, as is "Audio for Media"; "Portable Video" is taught once a year; "Photography I", "Photography II", and "Photography III" are offered sequentially each year. "Library Research Methods," on the other hand, is taught primarily through integration with program content.

Research methodology courses are taught at the Vancouver campus each quarter and at the Tacoma campus once a year. These courses generate approximately 1600 credits annually.

At the Evergreen State College, then, library instruction is very broadly defined. We are involved in both the production and retrieval of information and staff are encouraged to substantively utilize and extend their expertise. I hope this explanation offers you a sufficient sense of the context in which I have generated the data for your questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

Pat Matheny-White

Reference Librarian, Member of the Faculty



The Evergreen State College

STUDENT EVALUATION OF FACULTY

Frank Motley
Faculty Name

March 1988
Date began

June 1988
Dated ended

Library Research Methods
Program or Contract Title

During this quarter's "Library Research Methods" Class, Frank escorted us through the library with the same enthusiasm as a host opening his home to invited guests. Our class lecture time was well prepared and informative. I really enjoyed the slides presentation; discussing the contents and format of each source prepared us for its use, and open discussion was

encouraged. I used discussion as a time to ask questions about how to use the sources for my project, and it was also interesting to hear about other students' projects. Frank was also available after class during "lab" to help us with the actual sources.

I appreciated the freedom to choose my own project question and set my own pace. My bibliography question was not only interesting because I chose it, but I also saw value in the time spent because I used the research for another class. The requirements of the bibliography project improved the quality of my research and broadened my perspective of the subject. I discovered sources which I never before knew existed!

Student's Signature

Margaret Files
Name

06/02/88
Date

The following documents demonstrated how library workers promote media literacy and integrate research skills instruction into interdisciplinary courses and programs taught by the college's full-time faculty.



The Evergreen State College

November 17, 1988

Judith Espinola, Coordinator of Media Services
Library 1301

Dear Judith:

I want to thank you once again for the excellent series of media workshops you and Wyatt Cates conducted for the Political Ecology program last spring. The proof of the excellence of the workshops was the final results: five good slidetape shows of various study areas. All reflected the signs of

inexperience, but the process of developing the shows helped the students synthesize—indeed visualize—the biological, historical, and political material in a unique and enlightening way.

Based on my experience in the workshops and with the students, I would urge all faculty members to consider how they might work media presentations into their programs. I would also recommend that faculty work directly with the folks in Media Services while their students are so engaged. Direct faculty participation adds that vital link between a media component and the other activities of a program.

Regards,

Tom Rainey
Member of the Faculty

A Message for You

TO: Maah
4-25-89 2:30
 DATE TIME
 FROM C. Duckworth
 OF
 MESSAGE:

- ☒ Called You
☒ Returned Your Call
☐ Will Call Again
☐ Please Call
☐ Wants to See You
☐ Was Here To See You

SCAN NUMBER
OFF SCAN NUMBER <u>X6Z0Z</u>

Wants to know whether you
 would do your Princess of The
Town Palace lecture for her
 program.



SF 8023 3/87 -1261-
 3

A Message For You

CT
 INITIALS



TO: John Crosby, Book Repairs
4-16-89 10:15
 DATE TIME
 FROM J. Nelson
 OF Print Shop
 MESSAGE:

- ☒ Called You
☒ Returned Your Call
☐ Will Call Again
☐ Please Call
☐ Wants to See You
☐ Was Here To See You

SCAN NUMBER
OFF SCAN NUMBER

Can you teach handbinding to
 some of his students this
 fall?

Sarah -
 Should this
 be a learning
 contract?
 jc



SF 8023 3/87 -1261-
 3

A Message For You

CT
 INITIALS





The Evergreen State College

Syllabus of Media Workshops for the Program
 MASS MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE: Winter 1989

Instructors and Speakers

Ginny Ingersoll, Member of the Faculty
 Judith Espinola, Coordinator of Media Services, Member of the Faculty
 Wyatt Cates, Head of Media Production Center
 Char Davies, Electronic Media Producer
 Sunny Spiedel, Student
 Anne Stadler, Producer, KING-TV.

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|
| January 4
1-4 | Lecture: Overview of Media Workshops
Lecture: Writing for print vs. non-print
Seminar: Public affairs radio programming
Radio Interview assignment explained
Group discussion: Interview Techniques
Assignment: Work in groups on radio
assignment Research topic
(off-campus interviews)
Arrange interviews | Judith
Judith & Ginny |
| January 11 | Lecture: Recording and editing for
radio
Lecture: Introduction to Media
Production Center
Assignment: Complete interviews for radio
and edit into 3-minute stories | Wyatt

Wyatt |
| January 18
1-4 | Lecture: Editing video
Explanation about portable video pro-
ficiency testing
Discussion: General critique of radio pieces
Division into groups for TV editing
exercises
Assignment: Pass proficiency for video
equipment
Meet in groups and discuss
aims and subjects
for interviews
Practice video editing in
groups | Char

All |

January 25	Critical viewing of exercise: Comparison of three new programs An intern's view of public affairs at KING-TV Assignment: Complete video exercise	Judith & Ginny Sunny
February 1	Critique of video exercises Interviewing for television: Discussion and demonstration Assignment: Arrange interviews and prepare for interview	Char Char
February 8	The look of TV: Studio production Interviewing live vs. interviewing for tape Assignment: Shoot portable video interviews	Char Char

Apparently, such instruction is not without problems. The next memoranda suggested some of the tensions caused by the heavy teaching role of the library staff.



The Evergreen State College

March 13, 1989

MEMO TO: Susan Perry
FROM: Judith Espinola
SUBJECT: Information for Deans' meeting next week

Susan, here are some thoughts for your discussion at the next meeting of the Deans' group. Do let me know if you have further questions.

We in Library Media Services supply much of the college's instruction in media. While we do a good job with aspects of such instruction, our emphasis is usually on the craft of media production. We teach about the aesthetic capabilities of equipment; we do not teach philosophy of aesthetics.

Our work is well integrated into nonmedia programs where media skills are taught in workshop formats to encourage further the interdisciplinary instruction and experiential education already inherent in a curriculum area. However, media skills cannot supplement theoretical, academic work in communications or the arts, if such work does not exist. Students would not be encouraged to do audio work, for example, without appropriate backgrounds in music theory, criticism, and composition lest we train technicians at Evergreen in spite of our desire to do otherwise.

As it stands, faculty and administrators at Evergreen are sometimes too dependent on us to fill a teaching gap we are not necessarily qualified to

fill. Sometimes we have to nurse students in contracts with faculty not truly qualified to supervise and advise on film, audio, and video projects. We do this out of concern for student needs and do not always consider the administrative ramifications of such decisions.

In short, we do a lot of formal (credit-generating) and informal teaching, but I sometimes think that what we do is integrated into the larger curriculum in a somewhat piecemeal fashion. We need clarification of the extent to which we should be teaching, what kinds of teaching are appropriate for us to take on, and how dependent faculty can and should be on staff for teaching functions.



The Evergreen State College

April 15, 1989

MEMO TO: The Library Group
FROM: Malcolm Stilson, Head of Reference
SUBJECT: Faculty librarian responsibilities

I become extremely agitated when I hear complaints from the Library Group members who feel that the faculty librarians are not in the library and available enough. I'm an employee on a twelve-month contract. I have to cover the reference desk whenever the faculty librarians are somewhere else. I don't have faculty status; I'm often here more than 40 hours per week; I know what kind of frustration you feel when trying to locate one of our wandering librarians. But you should never think that because you can't find them, the faculty librarians aren't working. They are working, and they are working for us. The faculty librarians' responsibilities include the important role of liaison with the rest of the faculty and the instructional part of campus. Without the liaison function, we cannot, as a library, do our job effectively. Constant interaction among the library, the librarians, and the rest of campus is essential to the ability of this library to serve the unique requirements of Evergreen instruction.

Among the activities which draw faculty librarians away from their desks are faculty seminars. In these weekly seminars, teaching faculty and librarians discuss topics relevant to the programs the instructional faculty are teaching. For two hours a week, these small groups of three or four faculty members attempt to ensure a high level of discourse, gain inspiration for class seminars, and generally keep the mind alive. The librarians not only keep abreast of what is happening in the classroom, they also reinforce their collegial relation with the faculty, gain insight into the instructional methodology of the college, get ideas and inspiration for their own instructional activities within and outside of the library, and receive insights on collection and service strengths and weaknesses. Preparation for seminars has to happen during off hours.

The formal liaison program also draws librarians away from the library. The instructional faculty are divided up among the faculty librarians so that each librarian is responsible for twenty to thirty faculty members. The librarians determine the workshops and collections needs of the faculty member and his or her programs. The liaison work also includes proselytizing for library service and making sure that instructors utilize the instructional programs of the library. The collection development aspect of liaison work is extremely important. Since Evergreen has no academic departments, there are no separate departmental budgets for ordering library resources in any particular discipline. Library subject specialists have almost complete responsibility for collection development and acquisitions. Without extensive consultation with faculty and without paying close attention to curriculum planning and faculty concerns and interests, the librarians could develop collections which were completely unsuitable to the instructional programs of the college.

The results of liaison work are evident in the number of workshops offered. Workshops are tailored to meet specific program needs and the workshops frequently employ Evergreen-style nontraditional pedagogy. In the last academic year, the reference librarians did 103 program-related workshops (as opposed to tour-like general workshops) involving 172.75 hours of instruction and reaching 1,478 students. The Media Services area had major involvement in six programs in which students did productions incorporating research related to their programs.

Additionally, several of the faculty librarians each quarter work intensively with one coordinated studies program to integrate several credits of library research into the program content. The effect is to assure that library research becomes an activity intellectually linked to program content. This assures that library research is not misunderstood as a skill involving a few basic invariable steps applicable to any subject or student or discipline. It also increases the likelihood that students will absorb more of the practice of research as they do research on their actual course content.

It is not the librarians' job to sit at a desk and suffer others to come unto them. Even during reference service times, the librarians ought to be roving the area looking for befuddled patrons. So please recognize that working librarians are more likely to be up, out, and about than sitting patiently at their desks waiting for you to come looking for them.

The relationship between the library and the academic life of the college was becoming more, rather than less, complicated for me. A memorandum on teaching strategies showed that the complexity was a reflection of the depth of involvement in instruction by the library staff, an involvement which embroiled library staff in pedagogical debate and soul searching.



The Evergreen State College

December, 1989

MEMO TO: Pat Matheny-White

FROM: Mary Huston

SUBJECT: Issues of Teaching Philosophy and Content

Having just finished teaching the library research course this quarter and having begun preparation for teaching the comparable course at the outreach campus next quarter, I find that some issues have surfaced to which you might wish to give consideration in your plans for teaching the research course next quarter. Are we giving students the tools they need for survival in our changing world by offering them culturally relevant skills and concepts which will build critical reasoning and problem solving abilities? Are we in fact adequately addressing the campuswide commitment to enabling students? Are we empowering them to participate throughout their lives in decisions which affect them?

The following notes by Susan and me about our teaching experience in the outreach program in Tacoma last year discuss the modifications made in teaching "Empowerment and Information" to a largely Black student body. The modifications were made in an attempt to answer some questions about empowerment.

We are convinced empowerment of students through information instruction requires our reassessment of professional assumptions about education. Our philosophy developed as we taught a class of primarily urban Black adults in the Tacoma outreach program, but we feel the principles are transferable to developing any good teaching environment. Deviating from our usual approaches, we used the students' cultural references (rather than our own) as a context for information instruction, an approach which emphasized students' strengths rather than our own. We were well informed before and during teaching by the director of the program who had intimate knowledge of the backgrounds of each of the forty-five students. Additionally, student ownership of the education experience was encouraged by our repositioning ourselves: librarians and students worked together as resource persons striving cooperatively to make sense of cultural experiences in a bibliographical context. We achieved this by giving up traditional teaching methods and participating in the Black oral learning style used in Tacoma classrooms.

I believe that Susan and I appropriately recognized that the adult Black students required a nonconventional teaching approach. We need to similarly reconsider instruction in the main campus where we have a predominantly White, but increasingly heterogeneous, student body. In our regular library research course, we have resisted operating from any instructional

point of departure other than the bibliographic one. We explain research strategy in our terms, according to our subculture as it were. We say that there is a publication cycle. This line of thinking makes real sense. . . to us. But it is not a conceptual framework that comes naturally to the uninitiated, nor is it a particularly interesting way for the uninitiated to think about information initially.

The Tacoma experience suggests that we might productively offer culturally based explanations of how information is generated and share the position of expert with students. As we give up some of our power, students gain more influence in directing their own course of study. With such an approach, information would not be categorized in terms of bibliographical organization but in terms of the sectors of society and human enterprise from which information about different subjects, packaged in different formats, arises. Such pedagogy has the clear advantage of grounding instruction in the students' experiential and topical conceptual frameworks.

We must also integrate critical thinking and information evaluation into our instructional program; students must be taught to not only find information but also to "read" it. Even in the Tacoma course, where we recognized the link between empowerment and information in the title of the course, we did too little to emphasize to students that the library can be used to evaluate information as well as to find it. The resulting message to students is undoubtedly that finding information is the important thing, not assessing it. As recently stated: "Somehow, in our preoccupation with library procedures, we have ignored the reasons for searching—to learn, to make informed decisions, to evaluate applications of knowledge, to find truth" (McCormick, 1983, p. 339).

My field work had not quite prepared me to expect the following kind of communication from a library administrator to a long-time faculty member, but its facts and the premises which the participants shared seemed to summarize well the role of this library in its larger cultural and academic scene.



The Evergreen State College

November 22, 1988

MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: Kirk Thompson, Member of the Faculty
FROM: Susan Perry, Dean of Library Services

SUBJECT: Resurrecting old memos

Kirk, I decided to clean out some old files. Lo and behold, I found a memo which you wrote to Char Davies in 1975 entitled "Zen and the Art of Media Instruction." In it you react negatively to a proposal which Davies wrote as the Electronic Media Producer about the possibilities of offering media workshops by library staff. Apparently, he repeated the phrases "media tool use and technique" and "basic media tool literacy" throughout the proposal. You responded to the implications of such usage and argued that such a literacy cannot exist any more than "grammar literacy" or "typewriter literacy" can exist. You argued persuasively that liberal arts students such as those at Evergreen "must learn to be shapers of the messages which the media deliver, rather than just functionaries in the delivery system, and that we must present this viewpoint right at the beginning, because it is all too easily submerged beneath a superficial fascination with tool use and production technique.... Media instruction must focus on having something to say and on saying it well."

Many years later your words and warnings are still worth keeping in mind. Instruction from library staff has increased and infiltrated most programs on campus. Media and library literacy are spread with evangelistic fervor (when we're up to it). How are we doing in integrating the techniques with the messages to be shared? Ideally, though techniques-centered, our teaching is well-coordinated with the subject content, themes, and goals of each academic program with which they are meshed, not dropped willy-nilly into classes as space fillers.

Getting there is often difficult, of course. For instance, you can teach students about the uses and misuses of journalism in our society by discussing theory and facts with them. But a truly rich understanding of the impact of journalism, whether television or paper journalism, necessitates experience with the tools of the medium. How much better will their understanding of media be if they have a significant hands-on experience editing film and doing journalistic research? They can really understand, in the most experiential sense, the process of shaping and changing information. Conversely, one can teach students the techniques of searching indexes for an assigned topic, but how much better will comprehension be if students research information that they truly need to know, so that content drives the learning of technique. Let us not underestimate how well an understanding of technique can affect the nature of the message produced. Surely you are (were) right in insisting that we not function as a hardware store. In order to avoid such a destiny, faculty and library staff need to work together to ensure the proper wedding of content and technique in accessing, evaluating, and communicating information in all formats.

In short, I think it is as much a mistake to eschew the importance of skills learning as it is to ignore the primacy of content. We in the library are trained in the techniques of media production and information gathering; we must work closely with faculty to ensure the quality and vitality of the content involved.

EPILOGUE

When I rotated out of the Library Deanship three months later, I left a new document on Perry's desk:



The Evergreen State College

Susan—

Please call me when you get back this week and we'll have lunch. I'm anxious to share with you the pleasures and pains of doing your job for the past three months. (I'm glad I did it! I'm glad you're back!)

I now know how to use the resources of the library fully, you'll be pleased to learn, and see in a new way how to integrate them into my instruction. **THEREFORE**, may I make a formal request for the "Origins of Sexual Inequality" program which I'll be teaching with Stephanie Coontz next fall? I have talked with Pat Matheny-White who has agreed to join our team to integrate library research methodologies into the program content. She will join our faculty seminar, provide library instruction at approximately two hours per week, design, with us, a research project coordinating her instruction with program content, and, finally, provide occasional lectures related to her area of subject expertise.

Additionally, I'd like the students to use media to communicate their research for special projects. Judith could teach them writing for media; Woody Hirzel could teach basic photography for documentation; and Wyatt Cates could teach slide/tape production. If they can work closely with the students along with me, it will probably take three hours a week for eight weeks.

I know all this will end up being a substantial part of our program, so I'll promise to do some collection development in anthropology in return. Fair enough?

See you for lunch.

REFERENCE

McCormick, M. (1983). Critical thinking and library instruction. *RQ*, 22(4), 339-342.